

Organization Development and Change in Universities

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Organization development is an approach to planned change that is used in the private, public, and nonprofit sectors. However, relatively little is known about OD in universities. This paper examines the challenges associated with the use of OD in universities that may not be present in the private sector and other non-university settings. Five case studies of universities using OD are examined. OD-based change is on-going at each institution and events influencing change will continue.

Keywords: Organization development, Higher education, Change

Problem Statement

Relatively little is known about OD in universities and few models or frameworks for OD in universities exist. Since forces are present in universities that do not exist in the private sector and other non-university settings, there are unique challenges associated with OD in universities that are not well understood. What is the impetus or catalyst for adopting OD-based change in a university? Who initiates OD (administrators, faculty, external consultants, others)? Once started, how is OD sustained in university settings? What strategies are associated with the development and expansion of OD-based change? Why do some OD initiatives succeed while others fail?

To date these problems have not been addressed by research. The purpose of this article is to gain a better understanding of how planned change can be initiated in higher education using the models and methods of OD. Five case studies of universities undergoing significant change are examined to gain a better understanding of the issues raised by the questions above.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework for this paper is grounded in two main sources: (a) theories of organization and culture in higher education and, (b) theories that underlie the philosophy and practice of organization development.

It may not be surprising that much theorizing in OD has not been applied in the world of postsecondary education. Postsecondary institutions have been cushioned from some of the external environmental pressures that businesses encounter, but are also subject to their own unique pressures, both external and internal. But the external environment can no longer be ignored because of several critical trends in higher education, including changes in their ultimate markets (the businesses and other institutions that hire their graduates) and changes in technology that have fostered a new way of thinking about the design and delivery of learning services. In addition to differences in external environments, colleges and universities are using a more consensual model of governance that involves faculty, administrators, trustees, and (sometimes) students, their parents, and the communities served by the university. OD must take account of these fundamental differences between postsecondary institutions and other kinds of institutions when considering the challenges of initiating planned change in universities.

Theories of Organization and Culture in Higher Education

The dynamics of current and future change in higher education are undoubtedly related to the organization of the academy (Duderstadt & Womack, 2003) and to organizational culture in higher education (Tierney, 1988). Organizational culture is widely viewed as a critical component determining the type, rate, and success of change in organizations. Organizational culture in higher education has its own unique, distinctive features as compared to typical hierarchical, command and control for-profit firms. Moreover, different types of higher education institutions (two-year vs. four-year institutions, research universities vs. liberal arts colleges, and so on) manifest their own cultural nuances, much like the variations in firm cultures across industry, geography, and size. Regardless of the dimension(s) of change that are examined or of the type of higher education institution studied, the dynamics of the change phenomenon itself will be influenced by organizational culture.

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Schein (1985) asserts that culture encompasses basic assumptions, values, and norms. Culture is seen as a multi-level concept that includes individual, group/process, and organizational/structural level components. "Culture is critical to guiding behaviors and making choices about organizational design" (Rothwell, Sullivan & McLean, 1995, p. 208). Culture can impact change in higher education in many ways.

Addressing the need for institutional change in higher education, Welsh and Metcalf (2003) examined the chasm between higher education faculty and administrators in their study of change related to institutional effectiveness activities (e.g., program needs assessments and evaluations). Faculty support for institutional effectiveness activities was likely to be increased by ensuring that faculty perceive that they are personally involved in them. In addition, faculty support is bolstered if the prevailing definition of quality at the institution is based on outcomes not on resource inputs. The authors maintain that administrators are more likely to interact with external stakeholders and are more likely to be aware of and receptive to external aspirations for higher education. They state, "In sharp contrast to faculty, administrators believe that the institution they serve revolves around a nucleus of external forces that greatly affect the institution's continued vitality" (p. 447). Faculty tend to have more trust in academic culture than in administration. They remain committed to their disciplines and to their educative mission.

At the academic program level, faculty members often resist efforts to promote a systems approach that requires programs to assess outcomes in light of explicit goals. For example, Wergin (1999) reported that although departments recently have conducted more evaluation activity, the cumulative effects of evaluation have not produced constructive change in departmental planning practices, nor have they resulted in a stronger culture of collective responsibility. In addition, studies have suggested that faculty are not accustomed to thinking about curriculum change as a program level activity and often revert to describing their own individual course planning when asked to discuss planning and change at the academic program level (Stark, Lowther, Sharp, & Arnold, 1997). Thus, the dynamics of current and future change in higher education are undoubtedly related to institutional culture.

The Theoretical Base of Organization Development

Organization development (OD) appears to have originated in about 1957 as an attempt to apply some of the values and principles of learning from laboratory training to the total organization (French, 1969). The theoretical roots of organization development are grounded in human relations training (Bennis, 1963), action research (Lewin, 1951; Kolb, 1960), participative management (Likert, 1967), and strategic change (Jelinek & Litterer, 1988). A dominant influence on the philosophy and methods of OD as it is currently practiced is *action research* (Cummings & Worley, 2001; Rothwell, Sullivan, & McLean 1995). We adopt action research as a central element of our theoretical framework along with a comprehensive systems model that incorporates multiple levels (organization, work groups, and individuals) and shows how organizations interact with their external environments. Action research and the systems model, the Burke-Litwin model (Burke, 2002), are used to guide our understanding of how OD can be used as an approach to planned change in higher education.

Action Research. Action research is based on the assumption that organizational members themselves should be actively engaged in the process of change (Kolb, 1960). Action research is based on an iterative cycle of problem identification, clarification, data collection/analysis, and action planning for systemic change (French, 1969). Change occurs as new data is collected and used to guide further change, thus insuring that *action* is based on *research*. In the process, the organization develops its capabilities to identify and solve its own problems. In action research, the change process is itself an "outcome." The organization develops as it improves its capabilities for change management. The *action research model* (ARM) is the eight-phase process of entry, start-up, assessment, action planning, intervention(s), evaluation, adoption, and separation. Several versions of the ARM exist—all variations on a core theme. Those who are responsible for change are all who are involved and/or affected by the change (ideally, the entire system). "Sitting on the sidelines" is discouraged in action research. Collaboration for change occurs among organization members, facilitated by (a) change agent(s), who may be internal to the system, external, or both (Beer, 1980).

Burke-Litwin Model of Organization Development. As Birnbaum (2000) noted, higher education functions as a system, even though it does so in a manner that is different from business and other kinds of organizations. A framework that could be adapted to understanding OD in postsecondary institutions is the Burke-Litwin model (Burke, 2002) because it is a comprehensive systems model that incorporates multiple levels (organization, work groups, and individuals) and shows how organizations interact with their external environments. Changes in the external environment trigger change. Change is guided by work on transformational and transactional variables. Transformational variables—mission and strategy, leadership, culture—drive fundamental change, but cannot be effective without corresponding work on transactional variables—structure, management practices, and systems. Both levels of variables affect work unit climate, which in turn, affects individual motivation that is also affected by task requirements and individual skills, abilities, needs and values. Individual and organizational performance is driven by work with the variables in the model through feedback between the internal and external environments.

OD initiatives in higher education must take into account the diverse constituencies that affect its mission and culture. Yet postsecondary institutions are not typically structured in a way that makes it easy for any of the key players, let alone an OD consultant, to easily influence and work with all critical constituencies. OD change agents may also find themselves operating at the transactional, rather than the transformational level of change. Entry level may make it challenging to reach constituencies that can influence transformational variables. Even when fully adopted by private sector organizations, OD is a challenging and painstaking endeavor. Unlike private sector organizations, universities have broad educative and research-oriented missions that give them a different sense of purpose than private firms. OD must take account of these fundamental differences between higher education and other kinds of institutions when considering the challenges of initiating planned change in university settings.

Research Questions

1. How and why is OD in universities initiated? What is the impetus or catalyst for OD and who involved?
2. Once started, how is OD sustained in university settings? What factors are associated with the development and expansion of OD-based change? Why do some OD initiatives succeed while others fail?

Research Design

Five case studies of universities undergoing significant change are presented. These five case studies are part of an on-going study of OD and change in universities that began in the summer of 2003, resulting in the presentation of an Innovative Session on this topic at the 2004 AHRD research conference in Austin, Texas. Researchers are continuing to study OD and change at these universities and a proposal to publish this research in an issue of *Advances in Developing Human Resources* has been accepted by the journal's editorial board. Publication of this issue is expected in the fall of 2005. The findings reported in this paper address what is known about the progress of OD at each university at this time (fall 2004).

Case study research focuses on understanding the dynamics present within single settings. Case study research examines a phenomenon of interest present within case settings and takes advantage of the rich context for empirical observation provided by a case study. An advantage of using case study research to improve our understanding of new phenomena is that it does not rely on previous literature or prior empirical evidence. This methodology is particularly appropriate when little is known about a phenomenon, current perspectives seem inadequate because they have little empirical substantiation, or they conflict with each other or common sense (Eisenhardt, 1989). Since little is known about OD in universities, case study research is an appropriate research design for this study. Universities using OD will be studied to gain a better understanding of how OD-based change is initiated and sustained in higher education.

On the other hand, case study research has certain limitations as a research methodology (Dooley, 2002). Because it focuses on understanding the dynamics present within single settings, the concepts generated from case study research may have limited application or generalizability to settings beyond the case or cases examined (Yin, 1994). In addition, case study research has been criticized for yielding insights that are rich in detail but overly complex and lacking a coherent integrative perspective on the phenomenon of interest (Stake, 1994).

Five case studies of universities undergoing significant change are examined next. The cases studied are those of the University of Minnesota, Cornell University, Rutgers University, Babson College, and a research university in the U.K. Two main research questions were provided by the authors to colleagues at each of these institutions, who were asked to develop and write a brief case on the use of OD at their institution. The research questions were: (1) how and why was OD initiated? What was the impetus or catalyst for OD? and, (2) What factors are associated with the development and expansion (or failure) of OD-based change? The background of each case and a discussion about the use of OD at each institution was done by colleagues prior to the cases being sent to the authors. The cases submitted to the authors were analyzed specifically for findings to address each of the two main research questions. In this paper each of the cases is discussed for insights into how and why OD is initiated in a university and what factors are associated with the development and expansion (or failure) of OD.

Results and Findings

As would be expected, the cases reflect certain differences that effect how they are analyzed as early examples of the use of OD in universities. These differences include *how long OD has been used* at the universities. The longest duration of OD's use exceeds ten years; in the most recent case, OD was introduced less than a year ago. The *stage of OD* taking place at the universities is also different in the cases. Most cases are in earlier phases of change (e.g.,

entry and start-up), while longer-term change has been affected in three of the university cases reviewed in this issue. Differences also exist in the *scope of change* to which OD has been applied at the universities. In most cases, change is system-wide in scope; in one case, change involves a significant sub-system (i.e., university administration). Finally, differences exist among the cases in *how OD is introduced to or positioned in the university*. In some cases the use of OD has evolved over many years and OD functions are now visible and well-established at these universities. In cases where OD has been introduced more recently, the stimulus for OD in the universities resides either within external consultants or internal personnel (i.e., an individual faculty member or small group internal to the system who advocate the use of OD). Looking across the five university cases, the differences in their scope, duration, phase of change, and other characteristics made their classification and analysis challenging. However, when considered collectively these cases help to illustrate the potential of OD to enhance the effectiveness of planned change in universities.

The findings reported in this paper address what is known about the progress of OD at each university at this time. OD-based change is on-going at each institution and events are expected to occur that may advance or retard the progress of change. The issues and events reported in this paper will be presented at the 2005 AHRD conference. The conference presentation of this paper may also include more recent developments at the five universities that the authors and their colleagues at each institution will continue to follow in the interim.

Transformational Change at Babson College

Babson College, a private business school located in a suburb of Boston, radically transformed its undergraduate and MBA curricula during the mid-1990s, and in the process made many related changes at the college, resulting in a leap in standing and recognition (Cohen, Fetter & Fleischmann, 2004). Here we discuss how systemic change in Babson's curriculum was accomplished, the resistance to change encountered during this period, and some of the lessons we learned. The transformational change process was initiated soon after the arrival of a new president at Babson, a former executive from the private sector, he and the provost proposed that changes be made in Babson's curriculum. Four academic strategy teams, composed primarily of faculty, were assembled to examine ideas from external advisory groups, assessment data on student needs, and marketing research from a consultant. Early in their work it became apparent that major change was needed in the way decisions were made. Faculty involved in curriculum planning did not want to invest in new ideas they feared might never be implemented. Their concerns resulted in a significant change in institutional governance—the creation of small elected decision making bodies (DBMs) that eliminated the need for all important decisions to be brought to the whole faculty for approval, a cumbersome barrier to change. Instead, proposals from DBMs for curriculum improvements put the burden of proof on dissenters, not on the proponents of new ideas. In addition, we discovered that only when a number of respected faculty embraced the vision of the college's future would the vision then become an acceptable force for change. As changes in the curriculum were made, mechanisms were needed to institutionalize these changes. Faculty and staff collaborated to create oversight teams to facilitate implementation, the semester calendar had to be extended, and classrooms and adequate graduate housing had to be available. Major curriculum change required systemic action throughout the system.

Certain factors appear to be associated with the viability of the change effort. We have discovered that nothing was permanently locked in, and that continued attention to the changes is needed. We probably underestimated how easily new faculty could be socialized into our integrated curriculum, how much push and follow-up was needed by module coordinators, how our increased emphasis on becoming thought leaders (in research and publication) would create tension among faculty, and so on. We wouldn't call this "OD" in higher education, having learned from the quality movement how unusual names (like student as "customer") creates instant opposition. And there are challenges in academia, where the problem usually isn't getting ideas from those affected by organizational plans (as it was in the early days of OD), but quite often is about finding a way to legitimize getting decisions made and implemented.

Organization Development at Rutgers University

The OD program at Rutgers was initiated approximately ten years ago (Ruben, 2004). It has evolved from a "quality improvement" effort, which was created in the early 1990s to address institutional concerns about inefficiency, bureaucracy and a general lack of focus on issues of service and responsiveness to constituents (external, as well as internal). What was called the Program for Quality and Communication Improvement was chartered by the senior administration of the university, and given a very broad charge. In essence, the mandate was to lead an effort to transform the culture of the institution from one which emphasized regulation and control, to one that more highly prized service, support and facilitation. Given that the university enrolls over 50,000 students at three campuses, and employs more than 8000 faculty and staff, this represented an extremely ambitious challenge, to say the very least—and particularly so given the relatively modest resources and staffing provided for the effort.

The quality initiative has evolved into the Center for Organizational Development and Leadership (ODL) at Rutgers, which provides services to support the values of service, support and facilitation. Although evidence suggests that substantial progress has been made, certainly there is no shortage of challenges remaining. There are several lessons learned that have contributed to the evolution of ODL and to whatever success has been realized in our efforts. Some factors are associated with the viability of OD at Rutgers. We discuss some of the most important principles that we are learning about OD in a university next.

Language is important. What you call the OD initiative is important. Higher education has its own culture to be sure, as does each college or university. The decision as to whether to name and/or refer to the program or center with the term “OD,” “continuous improvement,” “institutional effectiveness,” “organizational assessment,” “strategic planning,” “leadership development,” or some combination thereof, is an important decision, and one that should be made after careful consideration of the national trends in higher education, the local culture, and past history at the institution. Language is also important in labeling programs and services. More than a few campuses have regretted a decision to refer to students as “customers” in promotional and program activities. Other problematic terms that work well in other sectors include, “management,” “training,” “deployment,” “benchmarking,” and “six sigma.”

Exercise caution in adopting programs from other institutions and sectors. A great many well-intentioned and otherwise promising change initiatives have gone by the wayside because they were adopted—rather than carefully adapted—from other places and/or times that were not well matched to their own institutional traditions and culture. The stories of such outcomes involving efforts to transfer OD or TQM programs from business to education are numerous indeed. We were fortunate to have received good advice on this from Johnson & Johnson, who itself was careful not to adopt the programs from other corporations without first adapting it to their culture.

Build on, link and leverage, the successful work of others. We are learning not to convey a sense that efforts to enhance institutional effectiveness or quality somehow began, or were limited to, our initiative. It’s tempting to stress what is new, unique, or special about your services. But, dangers lurk in such vanity. Linking new initiatives with previously or currently successful improvement projects within the institution, leverages the success of others, builds on traditional concerns with excellence, and creates solidarity with colleagues pursuing similar goals in the work elsewhere in the institution. When you talk about “our” goals and accomplishments, let the “our” refer to all faculty and staff in the institution, not just those associated with your OD work or program.

Develop change initiatives for both academic and administrative areas. It is important that a change initiative, its vision, and its supporting programs be acceptable to academics and administration. Look for improvement projects that will address academic needs, as a way to demonstrate the value of the approach and the resources you have to offer.

Teaching in all that we do. We know that students learn in the classroom, laboratories, and libraries. But it is also true that often, more powerful lessons are taught by our systems and procedures, by the way we relate to our constituents, and by the way we treat one another. We teach in all that we do—with faculty, staff and administrators. Those of us who are fortunate enough to work in the area of organizational change have the rare opportunity to help form the institutions, which shape the lives of those who will create our future. More than any single lesson, those of us at ODL have a growing appreciation of the importance of this opportunity.

The Evolution of Organization Development at Cornell University

There is a need for OD to maintain organization-environment fit and enhance performance in higher education. This discussion addresses the evolution of organization development at Cornell University, a large research university with approximately 19,000 undergraduate and graduate students, 3,038 faculty, and 9,254 support staff (Warzynski, 2004). Cornell provides the context for examining several different methodologies or approaches to organizational change and institutional adaptation that have evolved over time. The approaches outlined include a quality improvement approach, a leader-centered consultative approach, a reengineering approach, a strategic management approach, and finally, an emerging self-regulating approach based on the development of learning networks within the university. The models of change underlying these approaches highlight the critical factors and essential considerations inherent in implementing successful change and facilitating institutional adaptation in higher education.

The origins of OD at Cornell were quality circles that started in 1990 and a quality improvement program that was instituted in 1992. These related initiatives build infrastructure and provided tools for problem solving and for improving quality at Cornell. They also enabled people from various departments (academic, administrative, student services) for the first time to come together to learn the tools and methods of quality improvement. Executive consultation began in 1994 as a way to expand the customer base of organization development. Consultation on process reengineering in 1996 allowed our expertise to reach university departments that needed facilitation of work process redesign and assistance with organizational design. Leadership development was offered in 1998 and

performance management in 1999 to develop core processes and competencies in leadership coaching, strategic planning, team development, training, and conflict resolution.

Currently, particular factors appear to support the further development of OD at Cornell. Learning networks are being developed to create new institutional capability (Nohria & Ghoshal, 1997). Learning networks are communities within the university where relationships are nurtured, vulnerability and diversity are welcome, experimentation is promoted, inquiry is practiced with compassion, and questions can go unresolved (DiBella, 2000). People engaged in learning networks communicate with each other honestly and openly, offer themselves and others respect and feedback, are open to seeing themselves in new ways, encourage each other to sense, see, listen to, and speak of the whole system, and are free to be themselves. Learning networks are being developed as the basis for a more self-regulating approach to organizational change at Cornell.

Doing OD in Complex Systems—The Case of the University of Minnesota

Doing organization development (OD) in a university is similar to doing such work in any complex organization or system. This becomes even more difficult when the expertise to conduct such work resides within the university. Just as with other organizations, approaches for doing OD in universities do not always succeed. The attempt to do OD at the University of Minnesota did not succeed even though OD was initiated at the top level of the institution. The purpose of change was to introduce Total Quality Management (TQM) to the top administrative council level of the university. After failed, informal attempts to get interest and involvement from the top, the university President was approached directly to get a commitment from him to invest in the TQM movement. The President's intention was that Administration would be more open and less resistant than academics. The V.P. of Administration was enthusiastic and saw the potential for process improvements within his areas of responsibility.

Unfortunately, however, client commitment and ownership of change were lacking. This surfaced as the action planning phase of the process began. Rather than leaving the process when it became clear that there was not shared ownership of the process and there was not a readiness for change widely shared among the administrative council, we continued forward—not wanting to concede defeat, especially because those on the change team from within the university saw the essential need for change that would affect our professional lives, and because we believed that both ownership and readiness for change would emerge through education. We were wrong, and we should have walked out at this stage. It was clear that top administration had no commitment to TQM, but that they were aware of the university President's and V.P. of Administration's support and felt that they had to move forward doing something. So, some training was approved and scheduled on a volunteer basis for managers and supervisors within Administration and its divisions and functions. Ultimately, however, the OD effort resulted in a failed attempt to introduce TQM to Administration of the university.

Some factors associated with the viability (success or failure) of OD indicate that problems will exist when:

- a formal and detailed needs assessment is not conducted.
- the client does not display readiness for change
- short-term, non-systemic thinking is used by clients.
- the processes are mandated rather than allowing people to take on ownership of the processes.
- there is no contract that outlines the desired outcomes.
- Administrators hold faculty in contempt and perceive that they are less competent and less prestigious than administrators or outside consultants.
- clients are not paying large amounts for the intervention but may, in fact, be receiving the services for free.
- no upfront evaluation plan is put in place.
- the interventions are perceived as tasks to be done rather than processes to be developed and embraced.

Leadership Development for Organizational Change in a "New" U.K. University

An OD effort within a new university in the UK was initiated to bring about major cultural change designed to enable the university to compete in an increasingly unpredictable sector in which funding is no longer seen as the responsibility of the state. At the heart of this OD intervention is a leadership development program which is discussed both in terms of OD and its assumptions about the role of leadership. The top 120 academics and senior managers in the University were interviewed and two focus groups were conducted to discover the views, opinions and understanding of the university's organizational change agenda, hopes, fears, and concerns about the university's future and the possibilities offered by an OD intervention. In our inquiry we are encountering complex and interrelated tensions, which ongoing study of change at the "New" University will continue to explore.

These tensions, as factors associated with the viability of OD at the University, can be summarized as being between administrative and faculty leadership, between the desire for transformational leadership and the preference for no leadership, between managerialism and collegiality, between organizational leadership and departmental leadership, between business interests and academic freedoms, between faculty autonomy and administrative

control, between pragmatism in learning and teaching and democratization of teaching, research and administration. In addition there is a clear tension between the belief that leadership should reside at the top of the organization and the acceptance that leadership responsibility should be distributed throughout the organization.

Leadership appears to lie at the heart of the OD process at the University. Further study is needed to investigate the impact of increasingly effective leadership on organizational performance and the subsequent success of the OD process. While there appear to be similarities with other studies of the use of OD in universities, a wider pool of research on OD in higher education is now needed, particularly studies of a cross cultural nature, in order to overlay questions regarding national cultural values and characteristics.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The five cases reviewed, each in a unique university setting, are at different stages of OD. Since the phases of OD-based change entail different challenges during each phase, the universities in earlier phases (e.g., entry and start-up) show different features than those where OD has become more established. Few cases seem to follow the cycle of participatory action research represented by the action research model (French, 1969; Beer, 1980). Most cases show the early engagement of the change agent(s) with the system through some form of contracting and further probing of the possible changes envisioned for the system. Only a few cases go beyond the assessment and feedback phases (Babson, Cornell, Rutgers). Babson completed a major curriculum revision. In the Minnesota example the parties became stalled in the process of determining the nature of the problem to be addressed and by disagreement over the mutual expectations of each party for responsibility in the change process. Across all five university cases, OD-based change is on-going, although at different phases, and continuing collaboration is needed to gain commitment to initiate change (in cases at earlier phases) and to institutionalize change (in cases at later phases).

Further research should be conducted to see if existing frameworks for OD could be adapted for use in postsecondary institutions. Researchers at universities in early stages of change could examine the Burke-Litwin model (Burke, 2002) of OD to see how well the model guides the change process. For universities where OD is more established, the Burke-Litwin model or other models could be applied to examine how well the model explains how change evolves at these universities. Many institutions adhere to the *theory E* (Beer & Nohria, 2000) approach to change rather than *theory O*, which is associated with organization development. *Theory E* change is characterized by strong centralized leadership, its purpose is to maximize economic value, it is planned and deliberate, and it relies heavily on structural reorganization and financial incentives. On the other hand, *theory O* change is participatory, it is focused on culture and developing organizational capabilities, and it is both planned and emergent. Higher education-specific models of OD (*theory O*) do not exist. Future research should develop and test models based on *theory O*, or models that integrate *theory E* and *theory O*, in university settings.

How this Research Contributes to New Knowledge in HRD

OD is widely considered to be an area that is central to the knowledge base and professional practice of HRD. While universities have always been considered important contexts for HRD, this is especially true today, given the formidable array of challenges facing higher education. OD-based change strategies are described that have been developed at institutions with a longer history with OD (Babson, Cornell, and Rutgers). These can be evaluated for adoption at other universities, and thus, have the potential for advancing the practice of OD directly through application to other settings. However, in most cases, universities are not using change models that reflect the philosophy and methods of OD. This paper helps demonstrate the need to develop more higher education-specific models of OD to guide the practice of OD professionals working in higher education. The testing and refinement of such models will provide more effective tools for those doing OD in universities. This study also contributes to the knowledge base of scholars interested in OD, change management, and in the study of higher education. The theories and models of OD that are currently used in higher education were developed for other settings, primarily in the private sector, and do not adequately account for the issues and challenges that confront higher education.

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